Downtown Transportation Plan Update

Transportation Issues Scoping Report

Downtown Transportation Plan Update Overview

and

Community Involvement Summary

January 2012

Contents

PART 1

1.1 SUMMARY

During the late Summer and Fall of 2011, Downtown Bellevue residents, employees and other stakeholders provided their comments on issues related to Downtown transportation.

City of Bellevue staff conducted several community involvement events and attended meetings to describe the update to the Downtown Transportation Plan – and invited responses to the question "What are the important Downtown transportation issues facing Bellevue?" Field events in the form of bicycle tours and walking audits provided the opportunity for participants to point out first-hand what was working and what could be changed.

Overall the community responded with personal observations and critiques of the facilities for walking, bicycling, riding transit and driving within Downtown as well as to and from regional destinations.

This report provides a summary of the comments – categorized by mobility mode. These may be used in developing project ideas for refining the Downtown transportation system. Additional information of a more technical nature will be gleaned from travel demand modeling and operational analysis. Project ideas will be subjected to feasibility analysis, compared to the project principles and evaluated through measures of effectiveness. Ultimately, a final report will include recommendations for projects that will support Downtown mobility and accommodate growth through 2030.

This report is organized in three parts. Part 1 is an overview of the Downtown Transportation Plan Update, including discussions of the purpose of the plan update and the role of the Transportation Commission, the guiding principles provided by the City Council, and an overview of the measures of effectiveness approved by the Transportation Commission.

Part 2 contains a summary of the public comments related to each mobility mode: pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and roadways. These are not necessarily verbatim comments but are summary comments distilled by staff from the input received at several community involvement events. Each summary comment stands on its own and is not weighted, prioritized or validated in any way by being included in this section. Interestingly, there are both common threads and divergent opinions expressed in these comments. While the community offered suggestions for projects to address the concerns, these suggestions are not included here – project ideas will be described in a subsequent report.

Part 3 includes all of the notes compiled by staff from each community event. This inventory of comments and questions from attendees reflects their personal experiences and observations, as well as specific project ideas. They were gathered in the field as well as in meeting rooms, and through e-mails and an on-line questionnaire.

1.2 DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

1.2.1 Purpose of the Plan Update

The Downtown Transportation Plan Update is focused on the transportation portion of the Downtown Subarea Plan, adopted in 2004, and will be consistent with the overall vision of that plan. This effort considers and incorporates growth forecasts for Downtown population and employment through 2030, the deployment of RapidRide bus rapid transit, I-405 expansion, final alignment plans for East Link light rail, implemented tolling on SR 520, and the effects of other local and regional land use and transportation plans that were not assumed when the Downtown Subarea Plan was adopted.

This plan update will identify and pursue multimodal transportation strategies to accommodate the anticipated future travel demand of Downtown residents, employees and visitors. Such a multimodal approach will consider quantitative and qualitative measures of effectiveness that will help hone in on the projects that will best match the needs of the community. A final report will include a list of transportation system improvements intended to support mobility for the 70,300 employees and 19,000 residents that are forecast for 2030, plus the visitors who help make Downtown Bellevue a vibrant urban center.

1.2.2 Community Involvement Summary

Part 2 of this document is a summary of the comments expressed by the Downtown community and other stakeholders who participated in events and meetings during the late Summer and Fall of 2011. These comments provide a starting place for further discussion on mobility strategies, and do not necessarily represent all of the issues that will be addressed. Existing plans and policies, technical information and engineering feasibility analysis will supplement the community's comments.

1.2.3 Council Planning Principles

The statements of principle acknowledge that there is considerable adopted policy in the Downtown Subarea Plan and Council direction on related matters. The planning principles provide for the development of a forward looking, multimodal transportation plan update that will accommodate forecast growth and meet the community's mobility needs out to 2030. Principles anticipate that an implementation plan will include leveraging a variety of funding resources and collaborating with regional partners to get projects designed and built. The principles embrace the concept of broad based and inclusive public participation, involving the residential and business stakeholders in Downtown and stakeholders in the surrounding neighborhoods and broader business community, each of whom may have different perspectives on the Downtown transportation system and whose input will help identify and shape project recommendations.

Plan for multiple modes of travel within and to and from Downtown Bellevue

Develop an innovative multimodal transportation strategy for Downtown Bellevue that updates the existing Downtown Subarea Plan project list. The recommended strategy should consider and incorporate the emerging and anticipated mobility needs of motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, taxi patrons and carpool/vanpool riders, and support the transport, parking and loading needs of employers, residents and businesses.

Accommodate the anticipated travel demands from the 2030 land use forecast

Ensure that the planned transportation system will accommodate the 2030 forecast for Downtown residential and employment growth.

Advance the adopted vision for Downtown Bellevue

Ensure that the Downtown transportation system advances and supports the land use and urban design vision for Downtown Bellevue - articulated in the Downtown Subarea Plan as a vibrant, livable, accessible, and memorable mixed use Urban Center.

Recognize changes in the regional and local transportation and land use environment

Incorporate local and regional transportation projects and plans that have been approved and/or implemented since the Downtown Subarea Plan was adopted in 2004. Transportation system changes include East Link, SR 520 expansion and tolling, improvements to I-90 and I-405, and the Bellevue Mobility and Infrastructure Initiative. Planning changes include the updated Bel-Red Subarea Plan, the Wilburton Subarea Plan and the Eastgate/I-90 Corridor Study.

Integrate City Council direction

As potential Downtown transportation projects are identified, incorporate City Council direction on regional transportation facilities, such as the Downtown alignment for East Link and the I-405 Master Plan.

Provide for comprehensive public involvement

Ensure that the process to update the Downtown Transportation Plan invites broad and inclusive public involvement that engages the diverse Downtown commercial and residential communities, nearby residential neighborhoods, and other community stakeholders.

Minimize traffic impacts on neighborhoods

Consider measures as needed to protect Downtown residents and nearby residential neighborhoods from significant adverse impacts from traffic and commuter parking.

Involve regional transportation and planning partners

Coordinate planning for the Downtown Bellevue transportation system with regional transportation and planning partners, such as the Puget Sound Regional Council, Washington State Department of Transportation, Sound Transit, and King County Metro, and work to ensure Downtown projects and plans are compatible with each other and are consistent in support of mobility and economic development in Downtown Bellevue.

Leverage funding from outside sources to implement projects

Identify transportation system projects that effectively leverage grant funding opportunities. These types of projects will achieve multiple mobility objectives, support economic vitality and residential development, and will sustain Downtown Bellevue's regional status as a Metropolitan City and Urban Center.

Utilize measures of effectiveness to evaluate potential projects

Use both quantitative and qualitative measures of effectiveness to evaluate project ideas relative to each other and to community objectives. Consider the cost of a project relative to its benefit to mobility as an important metric, in addition to measures such as improved safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, management of traffic congestion, and the efficient use of the available right-of-way.

1.2.4 Transportation Commission Role

The City Council has appointed the Transportation Commission to serve as the advisory body for the Downtown Transportation Plan Update. During monthly meetings, the Commission will be engaged with the community to address the existing and emerging challenges of Downtown mobility. Section 1.3 of this report describes the measures of effectiveness that were approved by the Transportation Commission. The Commission will guide the preparation of a final report that describes strategies for pursuing Downtown mobility and will include recommendations for Downtown transportation projects and policies.

1.2.5 Community Involvement Strategy

As is typical of mixed use urban centers, the number of people in Downtown Bellevue increases significantly each day as workers, shoppers and visitors add their ranks to the residents to create a large Downtown daytime population. As of 2010, there were 42,525 employees and 6,900 residents in Downtown Bellevue. Each person in Downtown uses roadways, transit, sidewalks and bicycle facilities to get around. All of these people, and the organizations to which they may belong, have a stake in the Downtown transportation system. Some components of the transportation system that serve Downtown may affect residential neighborhoods and businesses outside of Downtown, so the perspective of these stakeholders

is important. This plan update will utilize a variety of traditional methods and new techniques such as social media and walking audits to make it convenient and interesting for stakeholders to contribute. The community involvement strategy includes the following components:

- Public workshops and/or open houses will be conducted to increase opportunities for participation by the public at large, including residents of neighborhoods that adjoin the Downtown core. Targeted outreach to pedestrians and bicyclists and other user groups will ensure that their perspectives and experiences are understood and considered.
- Media and the internet will be used for broad and ongoing distribution and gathering of information. A project website provides current information, reports, and notices of upcoming meetings. Through social media such as Facebook, staff will provide information on upcoming events and will solicit public comment on proposed transportation projects.
- While the Transportation Commission will serve as the advisory body, other Bellevue boards and commissions will be engaged through periodic briefings. Recommendations from this plan update will be the basis for amendments to the Downtown Subarea Plan, therefore the formal role the Planning Commission plays in that process will be acknowledged.
- With the City Council as the client for this work and also the final decision-maker on the Downtown Subarea Plan amendments, staff will provide periodic updates during the process, particularly at key project milestones.

1.3 MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Transportation Commission approved "Core" measures of effectiveness (MOEs) to be used in the Downtown Transportation Plan Update. These are measures that will be generally considered in developing and evaluating projects for the Plan update. For this purpose, mobility is "personalized" to measure a specific effect of projects on the private vehicle occupant, pedestrian, bicyclist, and transit rider.

"Supplemental" measures of effectiveness may be considered if warranted as the plan update develops. They would address unique situations and may not be applicable to all modes or all types of projects. Use of supplemental MOEs will depend on the types of project ideas generated and the potential for packaging of compatible or complimentary projects.

1.3.1 "Core" Measures of Effectiveness

Based on international best practices, and the Downtown Bellevue context, several core measures of effectiveness will be used to develop transportation project recommendations. MOEs are based on the mobility outcomes at a specific intersection or location, on the effect along a corridor, or the results for Downtown Bellevue mobility as a whole, as shown in the figure below and described subsequently:

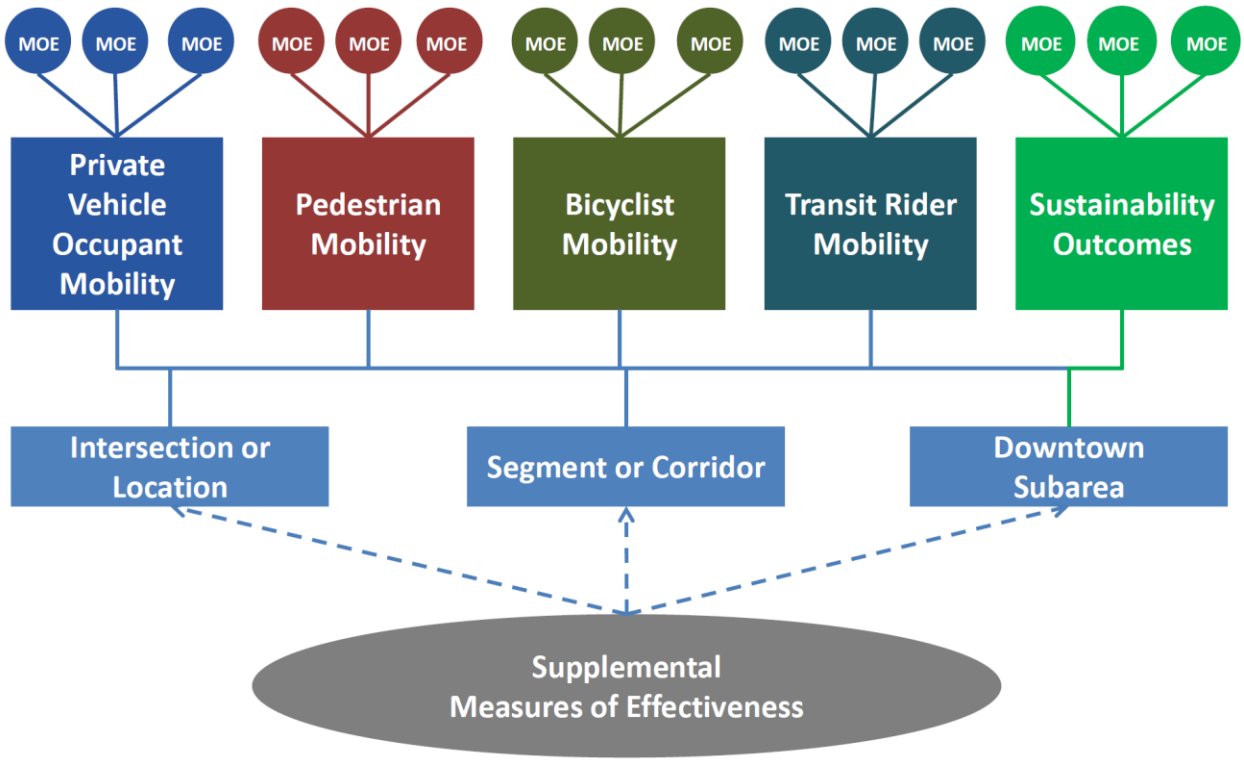


Figure 1. Core Measures of Effectiveness

1.3.2 Pedestrian Mobility

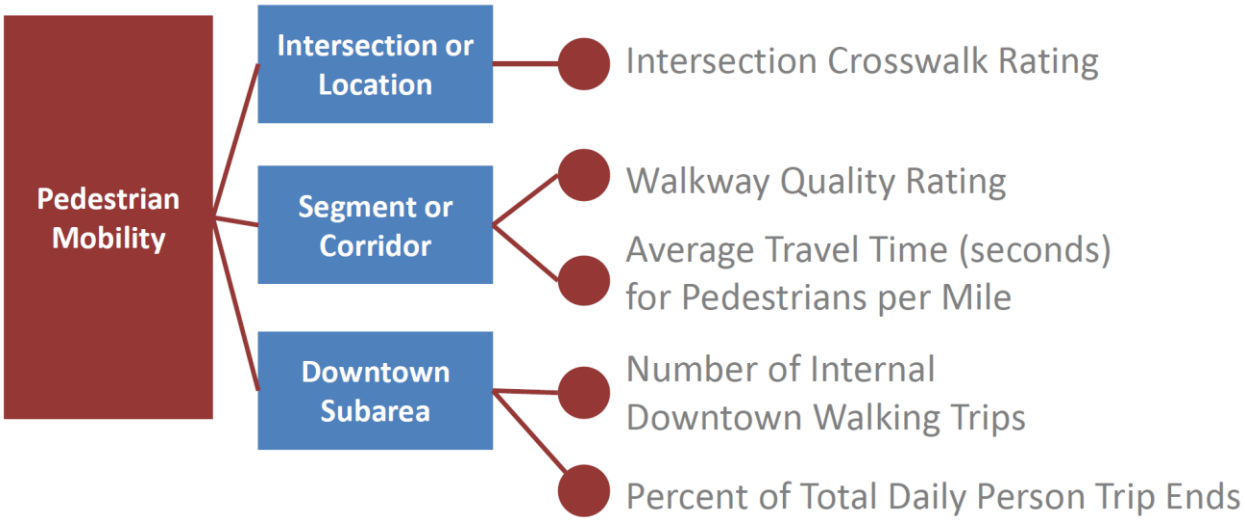


Figure 2. Pedestrian Mobility Measures of Effectiveness

- Intersection or Location
  - Intersection/crosswalk rating. This is a rating based upon a level of service determination that considers such factors as pedestrian delay, crosswalk quality and capacity (width), directness of travel, number of travel lanes to be crossed, and the volume and speed of vehicles.
- Corridor:
  - Walkway quality rating. This is a rating based upon a level of service determination that considers factors such as the number and grade of driveway crossings, obstructions, buffers from traffic, on-street parking occupancy, walking surface quality and capacity (width), weather protection pedestrian delay, and directness of travel.
  - Average travel time in seconds for pedestrians per mile.
- Subarea
  - Number of internal Downtown walking trips
  - Percent of total daily person trip ends on foot

1.3.3 Bicyclist Mobility

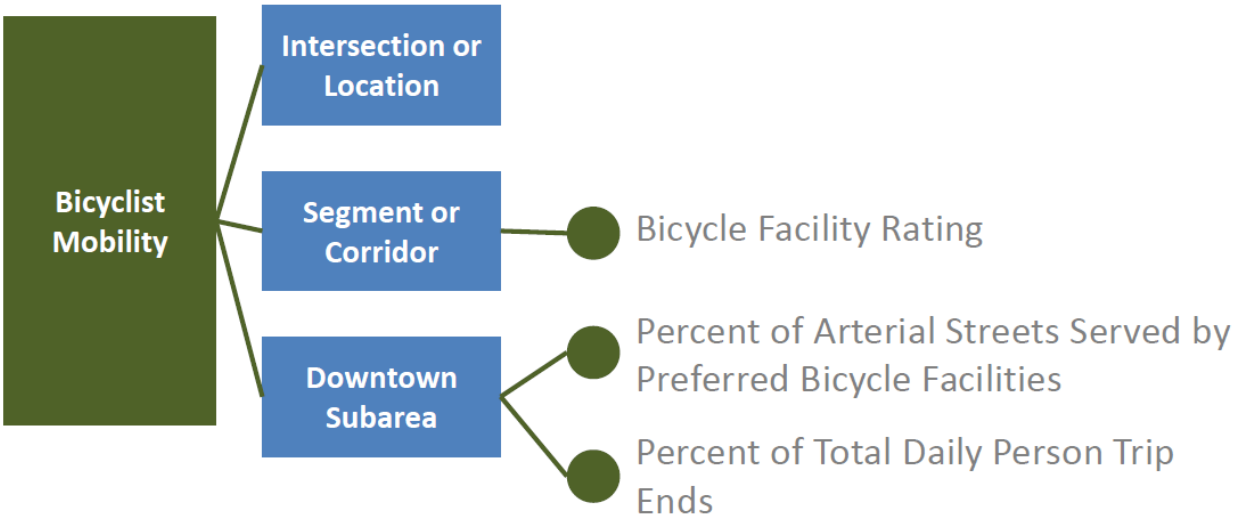


Figure 3. Bicyclist Mobility Measures of Effectiveness

- Intersection or Location
  - No MOEs are proposed to evaluate site – specific or "spot" improvements as these may not significantly change mobility of bicyclists as a whole in Downtown, and would likely be made in conjunction with corridor improvements.
- Corridor
  - Bicycle facility rating. This is a rating based upon a level of service determination that considers factors such as the type of bicycle facility, pavement quality, width of adjacent lanes and shoulders, number of through lanes, percent heavy vehicles, on-street parking occupancy, and speed and volume of adjacent vehicles.
- Subarea
  - Percent of arterial streets served by preferred bicycle facilities. Bicycle facility preference is based on the 2009 *Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan*.
  - Percentage of total daily trip ends by bicycle

1.3.4 Transit Rider Mobility

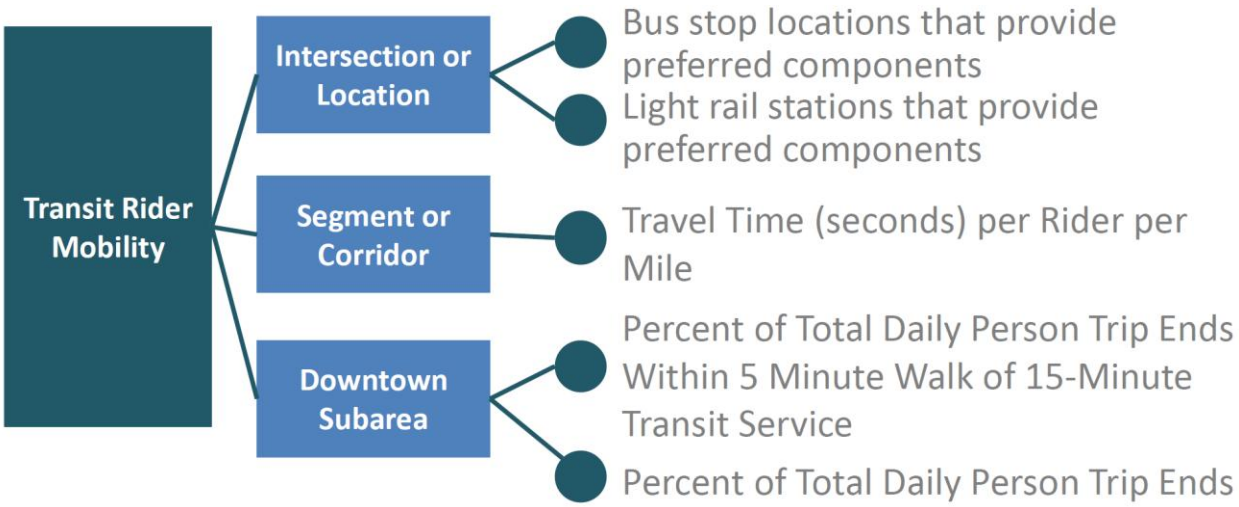


Figure 4. Transit Rider Measures of Effectiveness

- Intersection or Location
  - Bus stop locations that provide preferred components. The components preferred at each bus stop will vary depending on the bus stop use level and function. Use level is determined by the number of daily boardings, and function considers whether the stop is an important origin, destination and/or transfer point. Components such as shelter, seating, and real-time information, are appropriate for high-volume stops, and additional components such as wayfinding and bicycle parking are appropriate for transfer points.
  - Light rail stations. The preferred components to aid passenger mobility at a light rail station would be comparable or superior to those at a high volume/transfer point bus stop.
- Corridor (Transit route)
  - Travel time in seconds for bus riders per mile of travel corridor. This measure is used to evaluate the effectiveness of various street-level transit speed and reliability treatments.
- Subarea:
  - Percent of total daily person trip ends on transit.

1.3.5 Private Vehicle Occupant Mobility

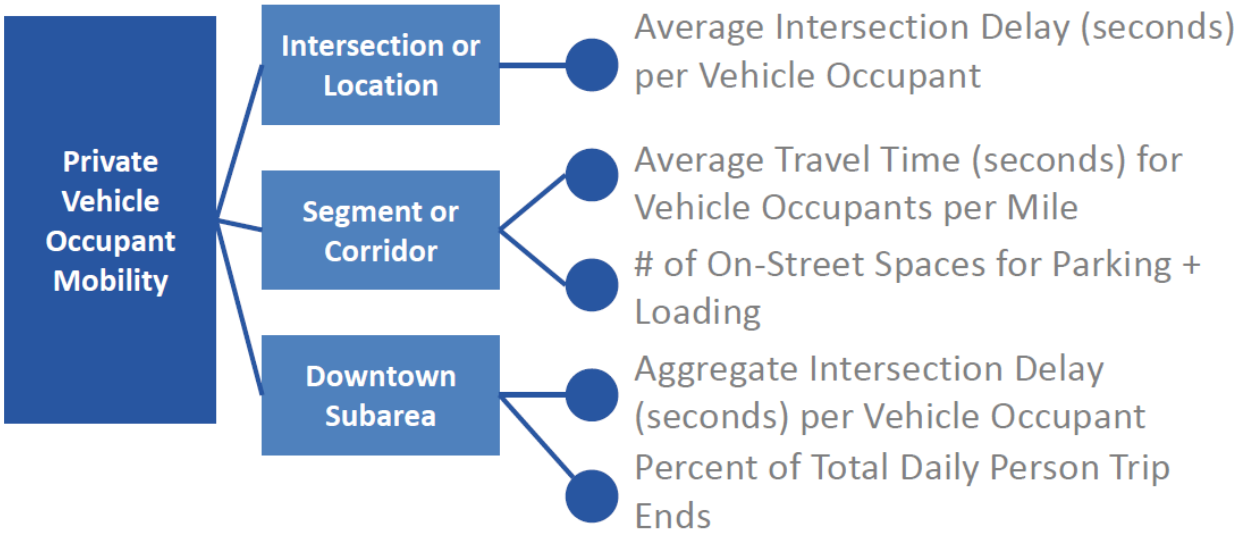


Figure 5. Private Vehicle Occupant Measures of Effectiveness

- Intersection or Location
  - Average intersection delay in seconds for private vehicle occupants. This is a level of service (LOS) calculation based on delay.
- Corridor
  - Average travel time in seconds for private vehicle occupants per mile of travel corridor.
  - Number of on-street spaces for parking + loading
- Subarea
  - Aggregate intersection delay in seconds for private vehicle occupants
  - Number of daily vehicle trip ends by private automobile

1.3.6 Sustainability Outcomes

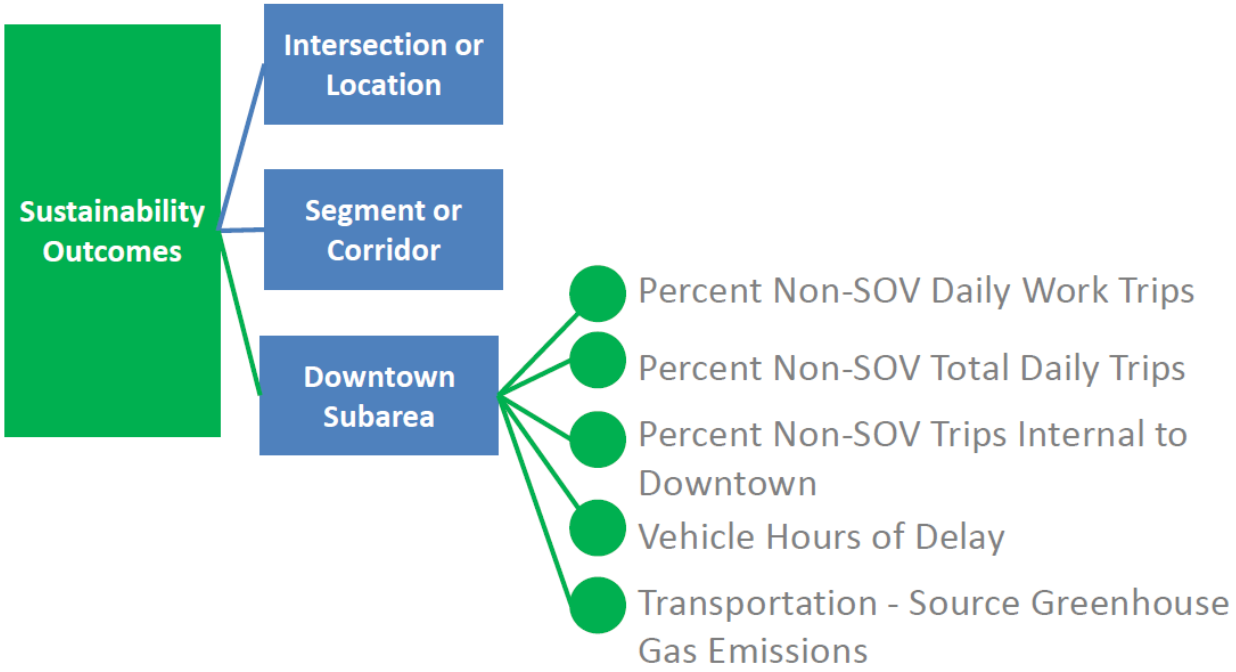


Figure 6. Sustainability Outcomes Measures of Effectiveness

- Subarea
  - Percent non-Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) trips – calculated on the basis of daily work trips
  - Percent non-SOV trips – calculated on the basis of total daily trips
  - Percent non-SOV trips – calculated on the basis of total trips internal to Downtown
  - Vehicle hours of delay
  - Transportation-source greenhouse gas emissions

1.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

1.4.1 Why a Community Involvement Summary

This community involvement summary documents the critical mobility issues raised by the community early in the planning process. Through a variety of community events, stakeholders have offered valuable insight that will help shape the ultimate recommendation for transportation policies and projects. This document is not a formal scoping report in the context of the procedural requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) that specifies scoping as a part of the environmental impact statement (EIS) process. For the Downtown Transportation Plan Update, an EIS is not anticipated. This community involvement summary report is an inventory of comments, organized by mode of individual travel. Specific project ideas offered are not highlighted in the summary of comments in Part 2 of this report, but are included for future reference in Part 3. Comments gathered to date do not necessarily represent all of the issues that will be addressed. Nor should it be assumed that all of the issues expressed in this report will lead to project ideas that will be evaluated though the measures of effectiveness.

1.4.2 Community Outreach Events and Activities

During the late Summer and Fall of 2011, staff met with the community many times and in various settings to listen to concerns and aspirations regarding the Downtown Bellevue transportation system. At each community event and activity, staff provided background information and invited public comment on issues related to mobility for auto drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. Interactive outdoor events for bicyclists and pedestrians supplemented customary engagements such as presentations and discussions with stakeholders, and an open house. Specific comments from each community outreach event are included in Part 3, Appendix.

1.4.3 Mobility Issues

For purposes of organizing the comments in this report, mobility issues and opportunities raised by the community are consolidated into mobility topic areas: pedestrian, bicycle, transit, roadway, and other transportation issues. Mobility issues contained in this report are those identified by the community and are one source of ideas for updating the Downtown transportation plan. Technical information from travel demand modeling, operational modeling, and engineering feasibility analysis will round out the base of knowledge upon which to develop project ideas.

PART 2 COMMENTS ON DOWNTOWN MOBILITY

2.1 Pedestrian Mobility

Mobility in the mixed use urban environment of Downtown Bellevue will increasingly involve walking from place to place within Downtown, even if the pedestrian initially arrives from outside of Downtown by car, transit or bicycle. A complete, connected and accessible pedestrian system provides facilities for walking along streets, across streets and through the middle of "superblocks". As a member of the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative pointed out, "A pedestrian system that works for older adults or for those whose mobility is impaired works for everyone".

Intersections/Crosswalks

- Intersections/crosswalks are locations of potential conflict between pedestrians and motorists. Causes mentioned for such conflict are right-turning vehicles that fail to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, aggressive yielding by drivers whose vehicles intimidate pedestrians into hurrying up, crosswalk encroachment by drivers who stop within a crosswalk, and inattentive pedestrians.
- Pedestrian safety and comfort at crosswalks is diminished in some locations due to the lack of clearly defined crosswalk space, poor lighting, and substandard curb ramps.
- Long wait times experienced by pedestrians at some intersections seem to be exacerbated by the need to push a button to activate the "Walk" signal– a pedestrian who misses the signal cycle by a split second may need to wait for a full signal cycle after pushing the walk button to get a "Walk".
- The "Walk" time across wide intersections may not be enough for some residents to comfortably cross, especially older adults, children and those with mobility impairments. Streets may become barriers to mobility if they cannot be comfortably crossed.
- Lack of physical separation between moving cars and pedestrians creates an uncomfortable and sometimes uninviting condition for pedestrians.

Walkways/Sidewalks

- Pedestrian access within Downtown is diminished in situations where the walkway or sidewalk is missing or if there are maintenance issues.
- There are not enough resting places. Many pedestrians would appreciate having benches for resting places while walking along a sidewalk or waiting at an intersection.
- Lack of weather protection over sidewalks in many parts of Downtown adds to the discomfort for pedestrians during inclement weather.

- Driveway ramps designed to slope all the way across the sidewalk instead of a design that provides a level walking surface requires pedestrians to drop down or move across a tilted walkway, which degrades the pedestrian experience and exposes pedestrians to faster moving vehicles.

Mid-Block Crossings

- Downtown blocks that have attractions on both sides of a street require a long walk to the intersection to cross safely where there is no mid-block pedestrian crossing.
- Mid-block crossings may create added conflict-points between pedestrians and cars due to the inattention of each.

Through-Block Connections

- Pedestrian connections through the middle of a "superblock" make it easier and more comfortable to walk in Downtown, but these are often not clearly marked as publicly accessible space.

2.2 Bicycle Mobility

Bicycling for recreation, errands and commuting is a mode of transportation that is preferred by those seeking exercise, to reduce transportation costs, or to do their part for environmental sustainability. In Downtown Bellevue there is a distinct lack of dedicated bicycle facilities, thus making bicycling inaccessible to many. Bicycle facilities are similarly absent on preferred routes to nearby neighborhoods or to regional trails. More people would be encouraged to give bicycle riding a try if bicycle facilities were present to provide a sense of security, comfort and continuity. The Portland Bicycle Plan For 2030 reports that a majority of Portland residents would be willing ride a bicycle for some trips if there were adequate facilities on which to ride.

On-Street Bicycle Facilities

- Lack of on-street bicycle facilities Downtown deters people from trying bicycling for commute trips, errands or recreational rides because many people are not comfortable riding in mixed traffic on busy streets. There is no connected, continuous network of bicycle facilities for cross-Downtown trips, in both east-west and north-south directions.
- Significant destinations in Downtown such as parks, the Transit Center, King County Regional Library, City Hall, and Bellevue Square are not comfortably accessible by bicycle to many people because there are no bicycle facilities.
- Bicycle facilities and wayfinding are absent on preferred routes between Downtown and major regional bicycle facilities such as the I-90 Trail and the SR 520 Trail, and across I-405 to east Bellevue and the future BNSF Trail.
- Bicycle riders get pinched or cut-off by vehicles at some median locations where there is a single narrow travel lane.

- Prominent pavement markings or other form of demarcation is needed at signalized intersections to ensure that bicycles understand where and how to actuate the signal.

Bicycle Parking

- Sidewalk bicycle parking racks are not available in many areas of Downtown, resulting in a bicycle trip not being made or bicycles that are secured to trees, benches and sign posts.
- Long-term bicycle parking for commuters may not be commonly provided by employers. When it is provided it should be prominent and visible, secure, and weather-protected.

Wayfinding

- Wayfinding is absent along bicycle corridors to Downtown from neighborhoods and regional facilities like the I-90 Trail, the SR 520 Trail, and the east end of the SR 520 bridge.
- Wayfinding intended for bicyclists is largely absent within Downtown.
- Bicycle detours around construction sites are not given the same consideration as is given to motorists and pedestrians.

Education and Enforcement

- Some safety concerns may be due to bicyclists who are not aware of the "rules of the road". Education and enforcement would help make it safer for everyone.

Maintenance

- Debris that accumulates within dedicated on-street bicycle facilities or on the outside of the travel lane may cause the bicycle rider to use more of the road to avoid the debris, creating potential conflict with automobiles.
- Deteriorated pavement in bicycle lanes may cause the bicycle rider to make sudden evasive maneuvers.
- Old-style storm drain gates with wide grill spacing can grab bicycle tires and affect rider safety. Several of these exist in some areas of Downtown including Main Street and 108th Avenue NE.

2.3 Transit Rider Mobility

Bus transit and future light rail will be increasingly tasked with providing mobility for commuters to Downtown Bellevue and for those who require motorized transport for any purpose of trip. Access to transit and the reliability of transit service are frequently cited as key factors in the choice to use the transit system. While other agencies operate the transit service in Downtown Bellevue, the City manages the rights-of-way on which transit operates, the signals that choreograph the movement of all modes of traffic, and the sidewalk system that

provides pedestrian access. Through these components the City can have a significant effect on transit rider mobility.

Transit Speed and Reliability

- When the bus gets stuck in general traffic congestion, or has to wait through a full signal cycle with a load of passengers, its schedule becomes unreliable and it loses much of its time advantage over the automobile.
- Bus loading and unloading are often slowed by fare payment on the bus.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

- Secure bicycle parking is not typically present at transit stops.
- Most regular bus stops do not have a shelter or benches, or other amenities that would make the passenger waiting more comfortable.

Downtown Access

- Bus transit integration with future East Link light rail stations, plus superior pedestrian facilities and wayfinding will be important to facilitate seamless transfers between modes.
- Transit coverage within Downtown does not provide adequate and accessible connections to hospitals, libraries, transit center, shopping, etc.
- Transit access is limited between Downtown and neighborhoods and commercial activity areas on the east side of I-405.

2.4 Roadways

Some streets in Downtown Bellevue are primarily tasked with moving cars and transit, while others may emphasize pedestrians. While many of the streets are wide and accommodate tens of thousands of vehicles each day, the number of streets and the amount of area they consume is less in Downtown Bellevue than in the downtown centers of Seattle, Portland and Vancouver, BC. Widely spaced streets are part of the ”superblock” legacy from Bellevue’s earlier days as an auto-oriented suburban retail center. The opportunities and challenges for urban mobility within the superblock pattern drive the need to have a wide range of facilities to help people get around in Downtown Bellevue.

Connections

- It is important to maintain east-west vehicle mobility across Downtown.
- Access between Downtown and the regional freeway system – I-405, I-90 and SR-520 is important to long-term economic development.

Traffic Flow

- Well managed traffic flow can improve mobility for all users of the roadways. Bellevue's recent use of signal operations technology to improve traffic flow seems to have helped, and should be more aggressively applied to get the most efficient use of the street system so that projects to widen roads are not necessary.

On-Street Parking/Loading

- On-street parking/loading opportunities are limited in most of Downtown Bellevue – resulting in more driving in search of a parking place and driving between proprietary parking places to patronize different businesses. Traffic flow is sometimes impeded when a delivery or moving truck takes up a travel lane and blocks traffic for an extended period of time.
- On-street parking is not a good use of the public right-of-way. It does not support retail, and is a crude method to provide separation between moving vehicles and pedestrians.
- Lack of "taxi stand" locations may inhibit the use of taxies for short trips that are important for elderly and disabled residents, business visitors, and tourists.

Other Downtown Roadway Comments

- Freight mobility within Downtown – including deliveries large and small – is sometimes problematic due to congestion and lack of on-street parking/loading zones.
- Better off-street parking supply management is needed and would help reduce congestion from motorists searching for parking.
- Alternative fuel vehicles will need specialized fueling infrastructure.

PART 3

APPENDIX –COMMENTS FROM COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT EVENTS IN 2011

During the late Summer and Fall of 2011, staff engaged the community in a number of ways to hear their concerns related to the Downtown transportation system. Notes taken and comments recorded by staff at these events reflect an individual's comments regarding their perceptions, experiences and hopes for mobility improvement. As such, the comments reflect individual opinions and not necessarily those of the entire group present. Nor do they necessarily reflect existing Bellevue policy direction or standard practice. Each comment will be considered in the development of project ideas for the Downtown Transportation Plan Update. Project ideas will be subject to feasibility analysis and measures of effectiveness evaluation, and a final report will include recommendations for projects that will support Downtown mobility and accommodate growth through 2030.

The list of 2011 community events is as follows:

A. September 14. Bellevue Downtown Association
   - BDA Downtown Access Strategy
B. September 24. Residential Bicycle Ride
C. September 28. Commuter Bicycle Ride I-90
D. September 28. Commuter Bicycle Ride SR 520 East
E. September 28. Commuter Bicycle Ride SR 520 West
F. October 11. Bellevue Chamber of Commerce
   - October 13. Chamber of Commerce letter to Mayor Davidson
G. October 25. Eastside Transportation Association
H. November 1. Open House
I. December 1. Walking Audit: Mid-Day Walking Errands
J. December 3. Walking Audit: Weekend Strolls
K. December 9. Building Owners and Managers Association
L. December 14. Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative
M. On Line Questionnaire Comments (through December 20)

A. Bellevue Downtown Association – Urban Planning and Transportation Committee

September 14, 2011
Comments and questions from BDA members in attendance

Implementation

- The implementation plan should include project designs and funding strategies.
- Funding strategies should be included as a component of the Final Report.
- Since the Downtown Transportation Plan Update will still be in progress during the next CIP cycle, will any of the project ideas generated have a chance of making it in that CIP list?
- Try to implement some "low hanging fruit" projects if possible for some short-term early successes.
- Implement some simple solutions that are relatively quick and easy to build and don't cost a lot.
- Look for opportunities for partnerships (such as public/private partnerships) to develop projects.
- "Sustainable communities" grant opportunities from the federal government can be used to supplement local CIP funds.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

- Has the implementation so far been a success – are there demonstrated improvements? How much capacity is "created" through better signal operations? BDA would like an update on the SCATS system.

Land Use-Transportation Integration

- BDA (draft) interest statement (included as an attachment) outlines the organization's perspective that land use and transportation planning should be well integrated.
- How will Downtown land use planning be coordinated with the transportation plan update? Downtown Transportation Plan Update will consider forecasted land use to 2030. Land use assumptions may be adjusted to account for the slower development cycle. Land use assumptions should be determined sooner rather than later; we need to make sure that the transportation analysis is accurate in capturing future development opportunities.

Local (Downtown) Roadways

- Consider general east-west mobility across Downtown.
- Think of projects that serve Downtown but also projects that are outside of the Downtown Subarea boundaries that provide access to Downtown.

Mobility for Freight

- Be sure to consider the demand for moving freight into and within Downtown in designing projects.
- Large trucks need access to the Downtown core – may need a "staging area" outside of Downtown to leave a trailer.

Parking

- Look at increasing the amount of on-street parking
- Also consider off-street parking

Pedestrians

- What locations do we have pedestrian counts? Document pedestrian volumes at more locations than just the NE 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor.
- Study pedestrian activity and volume at intersections – note that it sometimes is hard to turn right due to all the pedestrians crossing.
- Develop a deeper understanding of pedestrians' issues. For example, we need to have a better understanding of trips that are internal to Downtown. Pedestrian system projects are important for Downtown mobility. Improving the pedestrian network is important.
- A portion of the annual CIP should be allocated to Downtown pedestrian system projects
- Pedestrians are crossing at mid-block locations whether or not mid-block street crossings are provided. Locations such at 110th Ave NE at the Bravern and 106th Avenue NE at Washington Square have lots of pedestrian crossings because there are attractions on both sides of the streets and the blocks are long.
- Increasing pedestrian volumes Downtown are the result of increased residential density and jobs, which is good; consistent with the vision for Downtown.

Regional Access

- Consider freeway access to/from Downtown
- Integration with East Link light rail will be important

Trip Generation

- BDA has documented (through building surveys) increased Downtown trip internalization as an increasing percentage of Downtown residents also work Downtown. In some cases 40% of residents in Downtown buildings work Downtown.
- The project should consider how people get to work and the percentage of Downtown residents who work Downtown.
- Don't use standard trip generation formulas in modeling because the result may overstate the actual number of trips generated in a mixed-use downtown setting.

BELLEVUE DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

DOWNTOWN ACCESS STRATEGY
Bellevue Downtown Association | 2011

Improving mobility is a key factor to downtown Bellevue's success as a thriving retail destination, a center for knowledge workers and innovative companies, and a vibrant residential community.

Downtown Access Principles: The Bellevue Downtown Association believes successful transportation and land use plans should be guided by the following principles.

1. **Enable and serve growth (jobs, housing, retail) downtown.** Regional and local plans call for continued growth downtown, resulting in increases to daily trips. A successful transportation network will help stimulate development, attract jobs, residents and visitors. Transportation and land use policies should align with proper funding to maximize efficiencies in the transportation network.

2. **Optimize traffic flow.** The City should continue prioritizing strategic roadway capacity and technology investments to address critical chokepoints, improve traffic operations (to, from, within downtown) and minimize delays for all modes.

3. **Optimize light rail implementation.** The City should work affirmatively to implement East Link light rail pursuant to MOU provisions, with special attention to mitigating impacts and assisting downtown businesses and residents during construction.

4. **Maintain the safety, quality and capacity of existing facilities.** Downtown's limited roadways and arterial connections to regional facilities must be preserved. Maintaining what we have is less expensive than playing catch up.

5. **Establish priorities for the pedestrian environment and non-motorized access.** Much of downtown relies on inadequate non-motorized access. Design and investments should reinforce a compact, walkable, well-connected downtown.

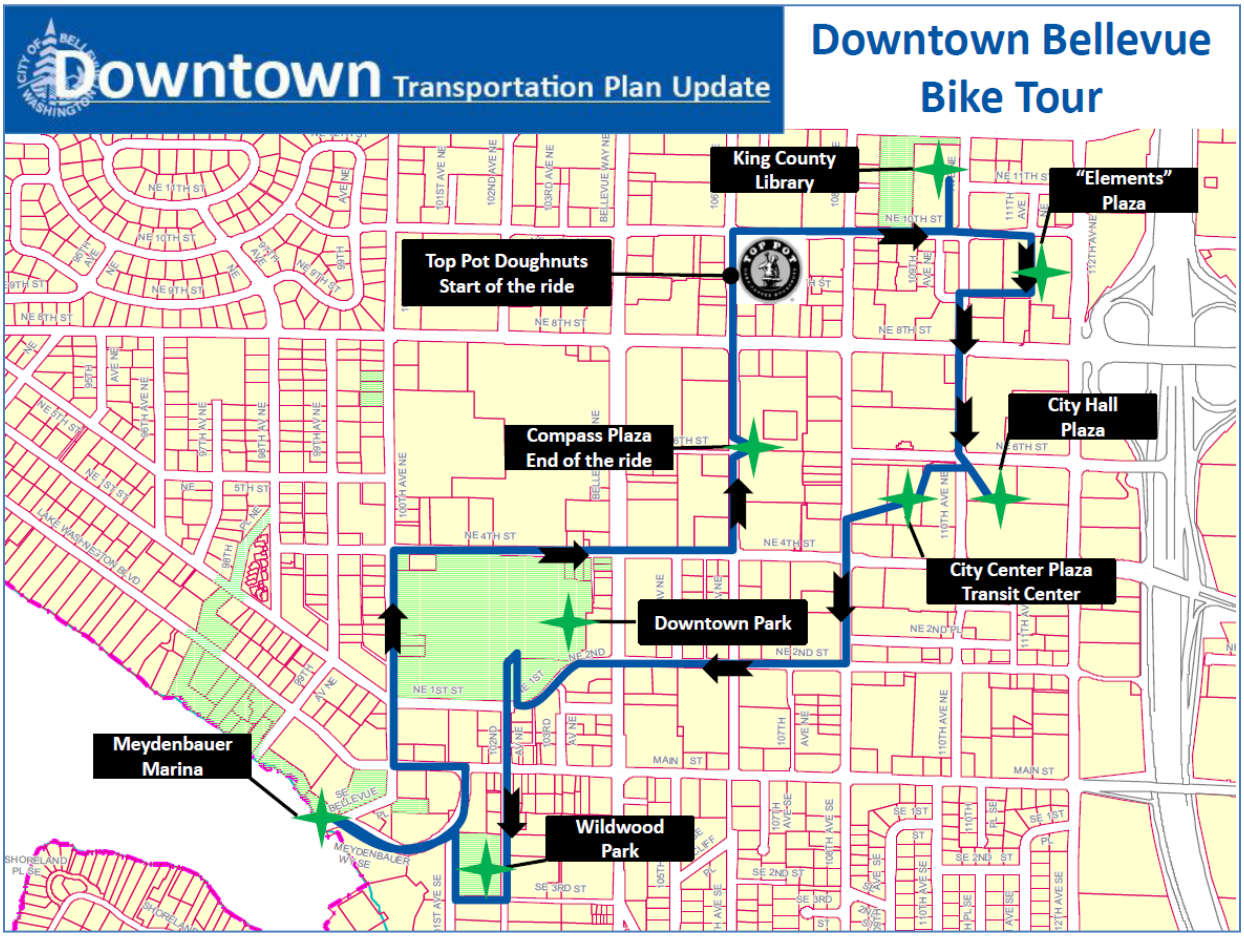
6. **Achieve mode-share goals.** Downtown roadways are constrained (superblocks, limited ROW) and resources are limited. As congestion levels and drive-alone travel costs grow, demand for reliable options (transit, vanpools, rideshare) will rise. Transit service and infrastructure should anticipate and respond to demand.

7. **Strive in all cases to reduce costs and environmental impacts.** Bellevue continues to support this principle by enabling and serving growth downtown.

8. **Minimize traffic, property and business impacts due to construction.** Downtown residents, businesses and customers require adequate notice and planning assistance to avoid or minimize disruptions.

B. Residential Bicycle Ride - September 24

Rider comments recorded by ride leader, Kevin McDonald



Bicycle Parking

- The availability, location and design of bicycle parking are very important. If bicycle parking is not visible, it might as well be invisible. Bicyclists who know they will have a secure and weather-protected place to lock up their bicycle are enabled to ride. Without such facilities, people may use anything else sturdy and available like a tree or a sign post to lock-up bicycles, others may choose to drive. Parking for drivers is almost always made apparent by signage. Bicycle parking signage should be provided at garage and parking lot entrances.
- Provide covered bicycle parking at the Transit Center.

Bicycle Facilities

- The city should consider installing protected bicycle lanes (cycle tracks) similar to those in Europe.

- Bicycle lanes and sharrows should not be located in the "door zone" where on-street parking is allowed. Seattle does this and it creates a hazard for both bicyclists and motorists.
- Sharrows on some lower-traffic Downtown streets would be useful.
- Road diets could be a means of adding bicycle facilities on existing roads without widening the road.
- Allow for bicycle left turns into the Transit Center from northbound 110th Avenue NE – the existing signage allows only bus turns (similar signage for southbound 108th Avenue NE).
- Better bicycle facilities will create a safer environment for everyone and will encourage people to try bicycling.

Corridors and Connections

- A connected network of bicycle corridors is needed that provides cross town connections both in the east-west direction and north-south.
- A clear and prominent east-west bicycle route through Downtown is needed – consider Main Street, NE 2nd Street, NE 6th Street (Pedestrian Corridor)
- A bicycle corridor through the Transit Center and along the entire length of the Pedestrian Corridor would be good for east-west connectivity. There are currently many barriers and obstructions for bicyclist along this route. It could be a great connection.
- Connect across I-405 on NE 10th Street and NE 12th Street
- Along corridors where there are landscaped medians – some of which have mid-block pedestrian crossings – the travel way for bicyclists gets constricted. Bicycles are restricted for a short distance into a narrow lane shared with vehicles.
- Form a family-friendly bicycle route through Downtown by connecting parks – particularly Downtown, Meydenbauer, and Wildwood parks

Destinations

- The King County Regional Library, City Hall, parks and Bellevue Square are important destinations but difficult for a bicyclist to get there because there are no good bicycle routes.

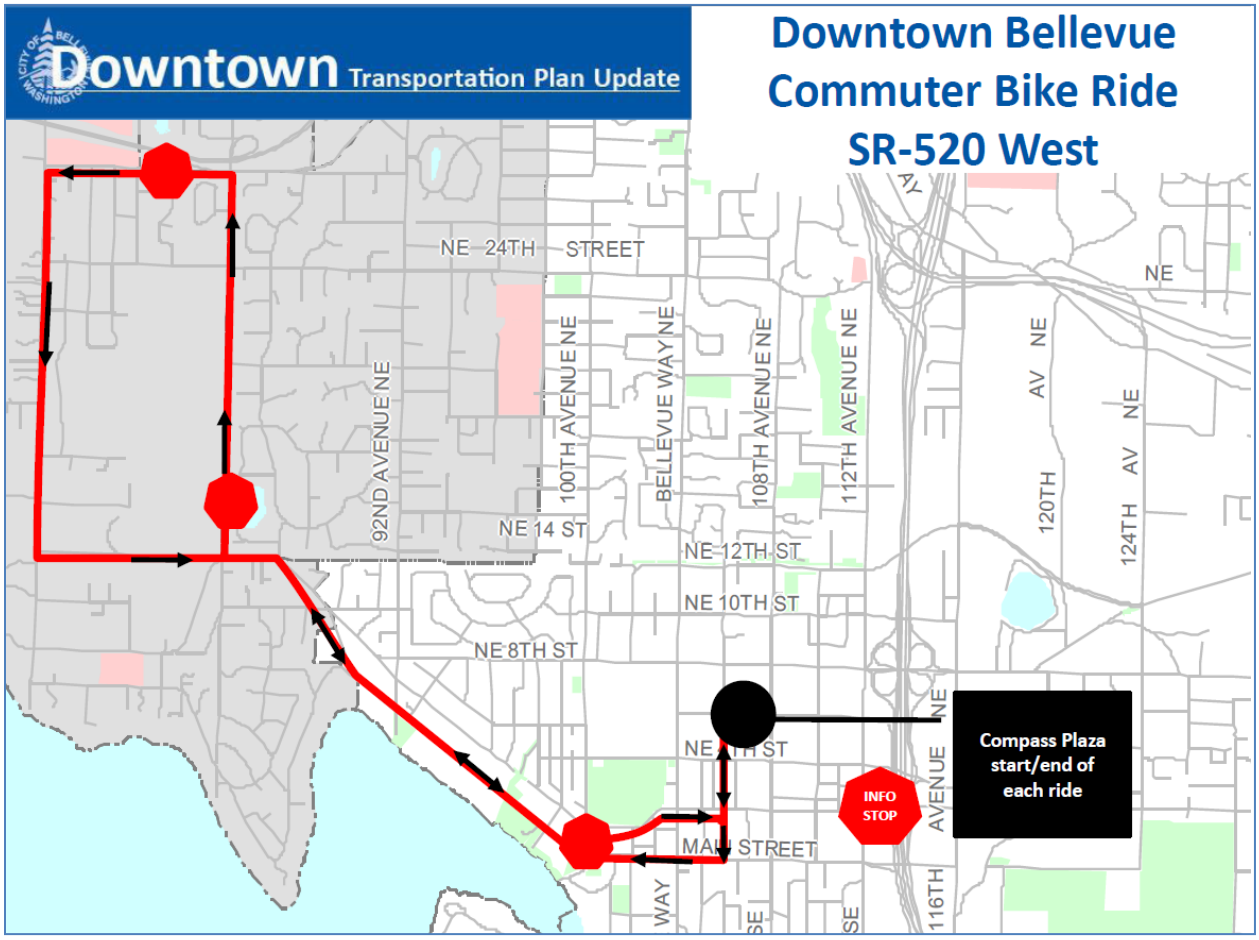
Wayfinding

- Provide wayfinding along corridors into Downtown – especially from the west and the north (SR 520 Trail).
- In general Downtown, provide better markings for bicycle routes
- Provide bicycle route detours around construction sites.

Education

- More should be done to educate bicycle riders about the rules of the road. Predictability of bicycle behavior is important for safety, and obeying the rules can lead to predictability.

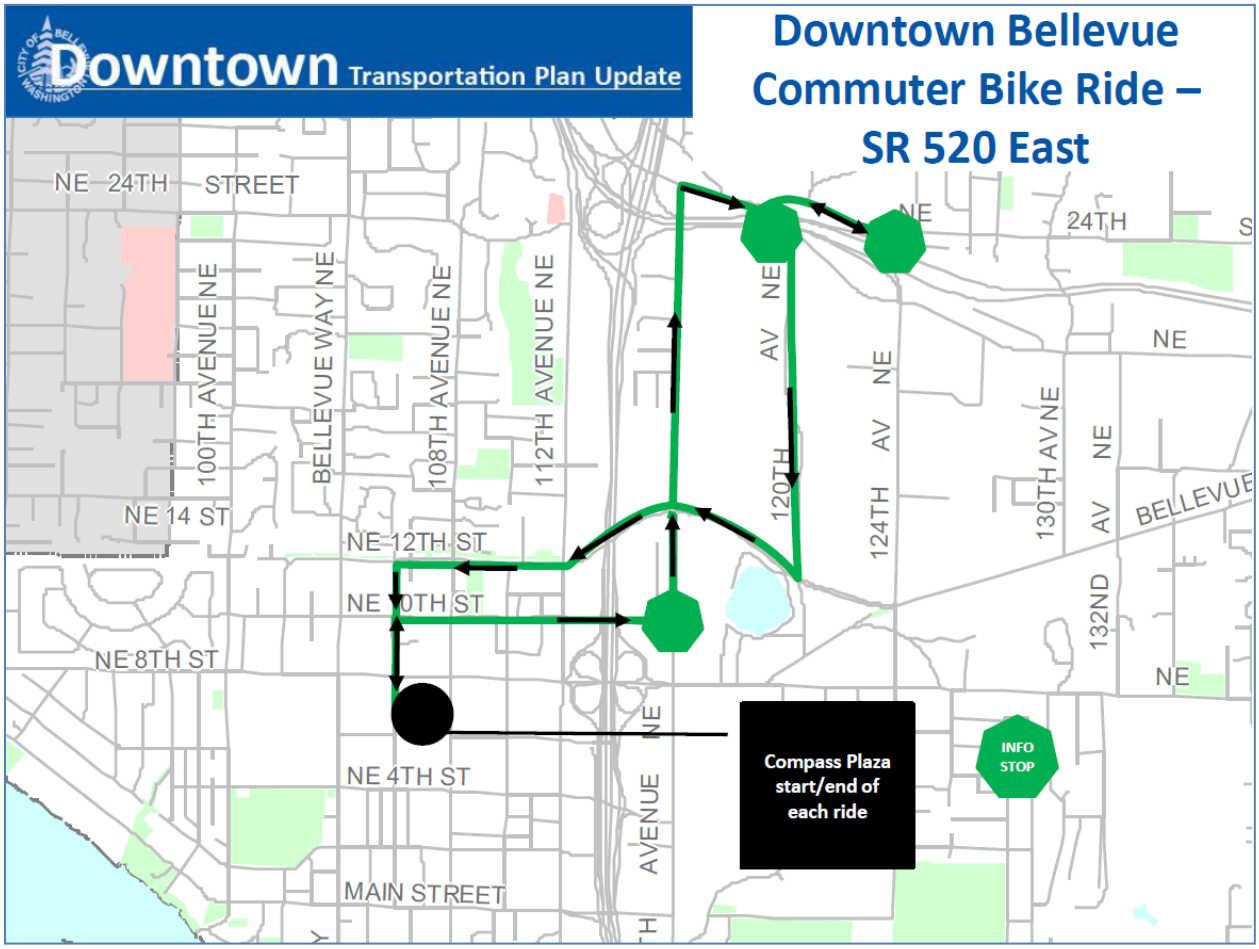
C. SR 520 West Commuter Route, Rider comments recorded by ride leader Kevin O'Neill



- **Sharrows:** Sharrows would be good on both Main Street and Lake Washington Boulevard which feeds into Main Street. They are helpful lane markings that let drivers know that bicyclists will also be using the roadway.
- **Bicycle Facilities – Lack Thereof:** There is a discernible lack of bicycle facilities in Bellevue, particularly in and around Downtown. Neighboring cities like Clyde Hill and Medina have bicycle lanes.
- **Bicycle Boulevards:** A lot of the City's plans and recommended routes tend to focus on major corridors and arterials, but the use of quieter streets should be considered (i.e. Portland bike boulevards). (NOTE: An alternative route from SR 520 to Downtown using residential streets was pointed out. It was suggested the City solicit riders for ideas on their "secret" bicycle routes).
- **Maintenance:** The City should do a better job sweeping/maintaining shoulders. Riders noted that there was an accumulation of branches, pine cones, etc., on the shoulder along Lake Washington Boulevard, which forced riders into the travel lane.

- **Bicycling Environment/Culture:** There was a general sense that bicycle riders were generally not welcome in Downtown Bellevue. On a related note, all of the riders in this group seemed very appreciative of the opportunity to provide comments.
- **Education:** Note: This isn't a comment that came from cyclists, but last night's ride reinforced that rider education is necessary. A couple of riders in the group didn't know they could ride on the sidewalk; others didn't know what "take the lane" means; and NOBODY knew what the "X"s in the street at intersections were for.

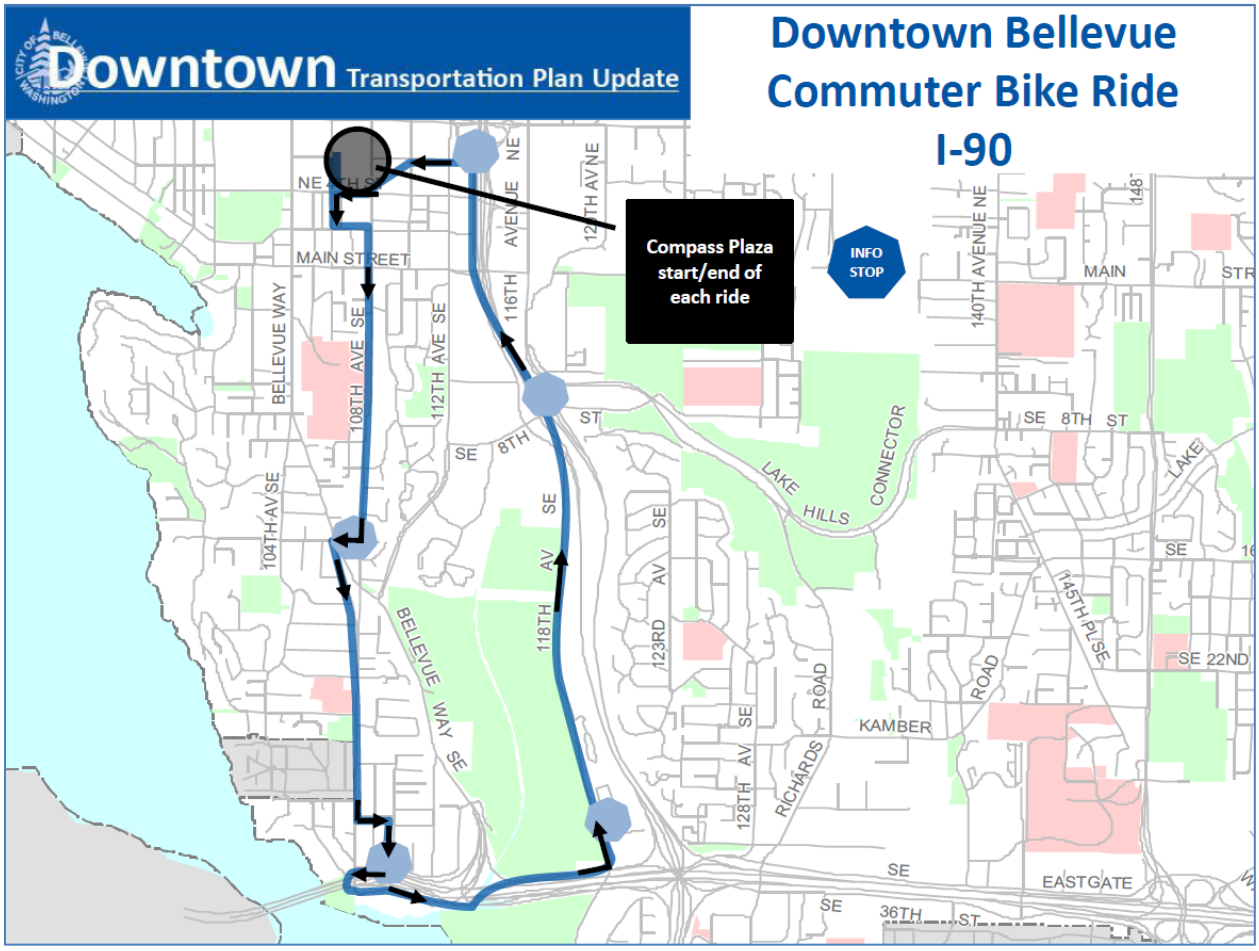
D. SR 520 East Commuter Route, Rider comments recorded by ride leader Emil King



- **Bike Detection at Intersections:** On some of the newly resurfaced streets (106th Ave NE for example), riders didn't know where to place their bikes at the intersection to trigger the signal, and noted that this is an issue at a number of locations throughout Downtown. Even at places where riders think they know where to place their bicycles to trigger the signal, the signal is sometimes not triggered by the presence of a bike.
- **Lake Washington Loop south of NE 8th Street (off route, but commented on):** Northbound access from the bicycle trail (extending north from 114th Avenue NE) to 112th Avenue is especially problematic. The trail seems to just dump cyclists off onto 112th Ave NE with no bike facility or markings, and thus no clear directions on where they should go from there.
- **NE 10th Street Bridge:** Riders were curious why there was no bicycle facility on the new NE 10th Street bridge. They noted the sidewalk on the south side of the bridge was very wide and observed that nobody was using it.
- **NE 10th Street to 116th Avenue NE alternate route:** A rider had used Google Maps to preview the route. They noted Google Maps advised riders to turn left into the Overlake Hospital internal access road off of NE 10th Street and then right to get back to 116th Avenue NE. They guessed this was to avoid the NE 10th St/116th Ave NE intersection.

- **NE 12th Street between 120th Avenue NE and 116th Avenue NE:** Riders felt especially vulnerable in this section where there is no bicycle facility, signage or markings. Going westbound it is uphill and cars are traveling fast. A number of riders said they currently brave NE 12th St/Bel-Red Road because there is no other choice for east-west travel in this area.
- **NE 12th Street bridge and connection into Downtown:** Riders were made aware of the cross section of the NE 12th Street bridge currently under construction. They thought the separated bike facility would be workable, but wanted to make sure it could be safely accessed from the different points of the 112th Ave NE/NE 12th Street intersection. Riders also commented that the eastbound and westbound travel on NE 12th Street once in downtown is problematic, no facilities, markings or signage.
- **NE 24th Street downhill to Northup Way:** After going up to the SR 520 Trail access point, riders came back down NE 24th Street to Northup Way. One rider commented that the downhill bike lane was nice, but most others didn't feel comfortable in the bike lane going at speed around the sweeping curve. They felt much safer riding in the travel lane.
- **112th Avenue NE southbound near about NE 30th Street (off route, but commented on):** A frequent rider commented that this portion of the Lake Washington Loop is especially dangerous. There is virtually no shoulder for a significant stretch of uphill (on the west side of 112th Avenue NE), while on the downhill (east) side there is quite a wide shoulder. She noted some of her friends ride against traffic (on the wrong side of the road) in this section.
- **120th Avenue NE:** Riders were briefed on the vision for 120th Avenue NE. They liked that there would be a bike facility. They wondered if in the near-term the two sets of railroad tracks that cross 120th Avenue NE at about NE 21st Street could be taken up.
- **Pedestrian Corridor, 108th Avenue NE to 106th Avenue NE:** Riders noted that east-west bike facilities within Downtown are non-existent today. They thought the Pedestrian Corridor should have provisions for slow moving bikes, but noted the potential for conflict with pedestrians. They noted that the Pedestrian Corridor is not fully built out in this area, so a re-thinking of design enhancements for bikes could be done in the future.
- **Wayfinding:** Riders thought there was a tremendous lack of bicycle wayfinding. Two prime examples included the Lake Washington Loop through Downtown and directional signage to the SR 520 Trail. Also, there was no bicycle signage for major destinations such as "to Downtown" or "to Hospitals".

E. I-90 Commuter Route, Rider comments recorded by ride leader Kevin McDonald



- **I-90 Trail:** There is a difficult turn faced by bicyclists on the I-90 Trail just west of Enatai Trailhead kiosk. This is the site of experienced near misses and observed crashes due to a tight turn and poor sightlines – there are several utility boxes on the north side of the path. Riders suggested that lane striping would help as would a convex mirror.
- **Main Street:** Continuous sidewalks and bicycle lanes are needed on Main Street. A couple of the storm drain grates are of the old style with parallel veins that catch narrow bicycle tires – these should be replaced (there are also a couple old style storm drain grates on 108th Avenue NE just north of Main Street).
- **NE 6th Street/Pedestrian Corridor**: There is a need for a better east-west bicycle connection to access the Transit Center. It would be good to have a complete, continuous and connected bicycle corridor along NE 6th Street between 112th Ave NE and Bellevue Way.
- **Bellevue Way:** Make Bellevue Way better for bicyclists because it is the best route in and out of Downtown – the parallel route of 108th Avenue SE is quite hilly. Bike lanes would be ideal for Bellevue Way. As it is, the somewhat wider outside lane works pretty well for the brave cyclist, but often there is debris and recessed storm drain grates that force the cyclist farther into the travel lane.

- **Embedded Loop Detectors**: Many of the loop detectors at Downtown intersections and elsewhere along the route have worn or absent markings for bicycle positioning to alert the signal controls that a bicyclist is present. These should be refreshed and use the new standard bicycle symbol to replace the "X". Program the signal for quick actuation – the signal northbound on 108th Avenue NE at Main Street is very good – riders don't need to stop sometimes because the signal changes quickly. However the signal northbound on 108th Ave NE at NE 4th Street is slow to respond and the loop detector is not well-placed for through-riding bicyclists because many motorists are turning right – and it is not possible for a bicyclist to use the pole mounted ped button at this location.
- **Medians:** On 108th Avenue SE, the landscaped median near Bellevue High School restricts uphill (southbound) bicyclists and motorists – it is too narrow for comfortable passing - and slow-moving uphill bicyclists aggravate drivers. In future situations where medians are installed, design them to ensure that bicyclists do not become unwitting/unwilling traffic calming devices. Provide a wider shoulder or if that defeats the traffic calming purpose of a median, provide a separated bike bypass lane.
- **Speed Humps:** Speed humps intended for traffic calming are not good design features for bicyclists on designated bicycle roadways such as 108th Avenue SE. Where speed humps are needed, a better design would provide the bicyclist with a level passage around the outside edge of the speed hump.
- **Wayfinding:** A significant effort should go into improving wayfinding signage between Downtown and the I-90 Trail. Wayfinding is largely absent now. Signage is needed all the way from the heart of Downtown near the Transit Center to the I-90 Trailhead at Enatai (for I-90 westbound) and to the Mercer Slough trailhead at 118th Avenue SE (for I-90 eastbound). Explore the use of technology applications than can assist in bicycle route wayfinding.
- **Sharrows:** Sharrow lane markings help to improve the behavior of both bicyclists and motorists. Results of the newly installed sharrows on 114th Avenue NE have been positive, although there was some question about the sharrow placement in a few locations. 108th Avenue SE would be a great candidate for sharrows between Downtown and the I-90 Trail. Sharrows can be used to augment wayfinding signage to guide bicyclists to regional destinations like the I-90 Trail. Also add "Share the Road" signs like the ones on Mercer Island.
- **Maintenance:** It is important to keep shoulders and bicycle lanes free of debris or bicyclists can't use them.
- **General:** Bicycle commuting in Bellevue is not bicycle friendly but is gradually getting better as more bicyclists are seen on the roadways. Bellevue has to continuously maintain bicycle facilities and upgrade facilities on key commute routes.

F. Bellevue Chamber of Commerce - Transportation Committee

October 11, 2011

Comments and questions from Chamber of Commerce members in attendance:

Comments:

- Need to look at the intersection of NE 10th Place with 120th and 124th Ave NE
- Bellevue Way is a corridor of interest—need to look at this in the plan update
- On-street parking in Downtown was meant to be temporary; will be very interested in tracking this issue
- In previous work on the Downtown Implementation Plan (DIP), there was lots of attention paid to overall transit mode split. Need to look at all projected trips per day and be realistic about all travel modes and their capacity to move people.
- The I-405 Master Plan includes a lot of transit (BRT and park-and-rides); should include that in the planned transit mix to serve Downtown
- There could very well be a building boom happening in the near future; the transportation analysis should help get ready for it.
- Land use analysis should assume a stadium/arena on the east side of I-405; need to understand the impacts of that on Downtown.

Questions:

- Will the Bellevue/Kirkland/Redmond (BKR) travel demand model be updated for this work?
- How will transit mode split be determined? Will there be a mode split "assumed", as there was when the DIP was done? Transit mode split assumptions should be based on realistic transit service.
- How are determinations made about the use of transit signal priority (TSP), looking at transit throughput versus general purpose traffic?
- What improvements will be assumed for the I-405 corridor for the plan update? This will have a significant impact on the Downtown's ability to accommodate growth.
- City needs to advocate for the full I-405 master plan improvement between Renton and Bellevue; will this be assumed in the plan update work?
- Are there updated numbers on total Downtown parking supply? How does it compare to Downtown Seattle. There needs to be an adequate supply of parking in order to help reduce congestion (in Seattle, congestion happens due to people looking for parking)
- How does the growth forecast for this work compare to total "buildout" for Downtown, under current zoning? Should consider doing a transportation analysis based on buildout, to assess whether the current zoning is realistic
- Will the scope include looking at alternatives to East Link? What if East Link never happens?

Comment letter from the Chamber of Commerce to Mayor Davidson

October 13, 2011
Dear Mayor Davidson:

The Bellevue Chamber of Commerce appreciated the opportunity to hear from Kevin O'Neill at our most recent transportation committee meeting. The presentation on the City's process for the Downtown Implementation Plan (DIP) was very informative and the committee appreciated being included as a part of the outreach efforts. Based on the discussion at that meeting, the Chamber feels it is appropriate to share some feedback to this process in its early stages.

As the Voice of Business for Bellevue, the Chamber understands that being able to get commuters and customers in and out of the downtown core is critical to maintaining both a strong business community and a strong tax base in our city. Customers and employees must have the ability to move safely and conveniently in and out of the Central Business District. To this end, we encourage you to review the origin and destination data for trips coming into downtown, including a careful look at the mode split. It will also be important, as downtown residency grows, to review and incorporate pedestrian needs with street traffic needs.

Traffic flow must also be a key consideration throughout this process. For instance, intelligent transportation systems should continue to be utilized and there should be a great deal of consideration as to how to best move traffic in and out of the downtown. This information will provide the basis for understanding travel demand.

We understand that the current review of the DIP is considered an update to the great work approved by the Council in 2004. However, we suggest that the council recognize some significant changes that have occurred since that time and changes that may occur in the future including: the impact of the voter-approved East Link light rail route and stations in Bellevue; opportunities for growth in bus rapid transit beyond the new RapidRide line B; the impact of tolling on the SR 520 Bridge as well as on I-405; a downtown zoning update; and the impact of the economic downturn on the City's budget as well as the potential for growth downtown. As these major infrastructure projects are constructed, we urge the City to regularly consider the impacts these projects will have on our local businesses and take steps to alleviate potential disruptions on all corridors, including those leading into downtown.

The Chamber also believes it is important to take inventory of the total downtown parking spaces. This would be helpful to businesses, residents and visitors in understanding what is available to them once they arrive downtown. An adequate parking supply will lead to reduced congestion as drivers will not be forced to look for parking while driving through city streets.

Finally, since this update will look forward to 2030, it is an opportunity for the City be very forward thinking and imagine how the City can lead the region in transportation planning and creativity. As we think about the recent developments in transportation and the likely growth of Bellevue and the region, we think that creativity and imagination will serve us all well. For instance, alternative fuel source infrastructure should be considered. Also, as the City of Bellevue continues to grow in population and becomes more cosmopolitan it will be important for the downtown to be able to accommodate increased taxi service and we believe this is something that should be considered.

We appreciate the Council undertaking this process and we are confident it will lead to better mobility in our city. The Chamber encourages you to consider what we have outlined as a way to conduct a very thorough process. The Chamber also urges the Council to maintain fiscal prudence and to be mindful of economic realities as you proceed with this update. Further, we would appreciate continued updates at key points as this project moves towards a Council vote. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you on this important project.

Sincerely,
Janet Ray, Chairman of the Board
Betty Nokes, President & CEO

G. November 1, 2011 Open House

Comments from members of the community who participated in the open house

Pedestrian Mobility Comments

Pedestrian Crossings

- Mid-block pedestrian crossings needed on NE 12th Street in the vicinity of 102nd Avenue NE and across 106th Avenue NE at NE 9th Street (at Top Pot Doughnuts)
- Grade separated pedestrian crossings (sky bridges) are helpful and there should be more of them
- Flashing crosswalks systems and mid-block crosswalks are good for pedestrian circulation
- Pedestrian scrambles, audible signals and countdown signals are good for pedestrians

Through-block Connections

- These connections through superblocks are useful but need to be better marked and signed to assure pedestrians that they are not trespassing

Intersections

- Southbound left turns at the unsignalized intersection of Main Street and 101st Avenue SE create backups on Main Street – could left turns be restricted?
- There is conflict between pedestrians and cars at major intersections
- Consider a delayed green light for motorists/early walk for pedestrians to allow pedestrians to get across the street more comfortably
- Incorporate “all walk” phases for pedestrians at some busy intersections
- Provide voice information at all pedestrian signals in heavily traveled areas

General Pedestrian Circulation

- Support for NE 6th Street and Main Street (in Old Bellevue) as pedestrian-bias streets
- Focus on providing transportation that is safe, accessible and affordable to older adults who no longer drive
- Light rail stations should be accessible, safe and comfortable for everyone
- It is miserable walking Downtown –make it a nice place to spend an afternoon
- Widen the pedestrian corridor to create a better connection between Bellevue Square and Meydenbauer Center
- Commons at Microsoft is an example of a nice terrace with wide walking access
- Walking times can be unpredictable, and the greatest factor is the time waiting for the walk signal at intersections
- Left hand turners are dangerous to pedestrians in crosswalks; NE 2nd Street at 108th Avenue NE is particularly bad.

Bicycle Mobility Comments

Bicycle Parking

- A "bicycle corral", bicycle lockers or similar secure bicycle parking arrangements should be incorporated into major public spaces with an attraction for bicyclists such as the Transit Center and future light rail station – particularly at the station entrance at NE 6th Street and 110th Avenue NE.

Bicycle Facilities

- Bellevue Way is not currently a good bicycle route because it lacks any accommodations for bicyclists – but it should be made better for bicyclists because it provides good access within Downtown, to neighborhoods and to regional connections. Bicycle lanes would be a good addition to the roadway.
- There is no place in Downtown Bellevue for kids to ride because there are no safe facilities.
- Getting to the I-90 Trail on a bicycle is difficult, and providing a bicycle path from I-90/South Bellevue Park and Ride to Main Street would help
- Improve the BNSF corridor for bicycling and provide good connections to it from Downtown
- The intersection of 112th Avenue SE and Bellevue Way is problematic for bicyclists
- Improve 116th Avenue NE as a bicycle corridor to the north city limits
- Expand the bikeways so that every resident is within ½ mile of a bicycle lane on an existing road, or within 1 mile of a separated bicycle path. This is a strategy adopted by Minneapolis and is their goal for 2020
- Provide better sensors for the signals at intersections to detect a bicyclist.
- Main Street in Old Bellevue feels unsafe for bicyclist – sharrows are not the answer.
- Consider installing bicycle lanes on NE 2nd Street to make this the main east-west bicycle route in Downtown
- "Remodel" Bellevue Way and NE 10th Street to be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and thus improve access to businesses along those streets.

Transit Rider Comments

Transit Facilities

- Light rail stations should be accessible, safe and comfortable

Transit Routes

- Rapid Ride Line B might be more rapid if it was routed on Bel-Red Road or SR 520 than on 156th Ave NE/NE 8th Street
- A circulator bus should connect Crossroads, the hospitals, libraries, transit centers to serve older adults
- Include a Downtown circulator
- Consider a Downtown shuttle service that would allow people to park once and be able to access the entire downtown area without a car, which is especially important in inclement weather. Seattle's downtown ride free area allows you to cover a large area without having to move and park your car several times.

- NE 6th Street should be extended across I-405 to help speed and reliability for RapidRide and other bus routes

Transit General

- Focus efforts on expanding transit, bikeways and pedestrian paths
- Public transit and non-motorized transportation plans are a great step in the right direction.
- Transit layover space on NE 10th Street near 100th Avenue NE was supposed to be temporary. When will layover locations be looked at again?

Roadways Comments

Intersections

- The intersection of Main Street and Bellevue Way should be modified to provide a free right turn
- Intersections should all be signalized with left, through, right arrows
- Allow green arrow right turns as appropriate
- On weekends get rid of timed signal lights
- There is a traffic delay on Main Street eastbound at Bellevue Way
- Signal at Bellevue Way and NE 2nd Street needs to be more responsive to traffic and pedestrians on NE 2nd Street trying to cross Bellevue Way

Corridors

- Make Main Street one way westbound (note: not sure of the extent of this one-way corridor intended by this commenter)
- East-west roads in Downtown are horrible, especially NE 8th Street
- Get rid of the median on NE 8th Street west of 112th Avenue NE – this should be a lane available for cars because there is a lot of back-up during rush hour, especially with people in the left lane making U turns

General traffic

- As all of the Downtown living and office space becomes occupied, traffic will be terrible if everyone continues to try and drive all of the time
- Seattle residents drive to Bellevue Square to go shopping because they view it as easier and a more pleasant experience than driving into downtown Seattle. It is important to maintain this ease of driving in order to keep the Downtown thriving.

H. Eastside Transportation Association

October 25, 2011
Comments and questions from members in attendance:

Comments

- Look at transit needs realistically, and should include transit enhancements, including bus rapid transit in the I-405 corridor, not just improvements between Bellevue and Seattle.
- The transportation analysis should include a calculation of "cost per trip", to assess economic implications of project recommendations for each travel mode. Would be helpful in assessing the cost/benefit of different strategies and projects.
- Big impediments to walking in Downtown Bellevue and safety concerns. Concern about speed of traffic; and wide intersections with limited "walk" time. There should be more physical separation to buffer pedestrians from cars. Through-block pedestrian connections are good, as are the mid-block pedestrian crossings. The existing wayfinding kiosks and plaques are good.
- Try to separate cars from pedestrians wherever possible. Sky bridges have worked very well for that and have not killed street-level retail. Incentives should be provided for additional sky bridges, especially where there are different property owners on opposite sides of the street. Street trees and landscaping along Bellevue Way are good. On-street parking is a crude and inefficient way to separate cars from pedestrians, and not a good use of street right-of-way. The "cost" of an on-street parking space is the equivalent of a private structured parking space. Mid-block crossings are also a concern—create new conflict points for pedestrians and cars.
- Accessibility is the key component for a transportation system for business, shopping and home. Accessibility should be as convenient as possible; don't limit parking or easy automobile access to retail sites. On-street parking does not support access to retail – developers should know how much parking they need and should parking on-site. Transit is highly subsidized and riders avoid paying the cost of parking, and transit often limits accessibility. Need to look at congestion for all modes. The Seattle street system was designed for a different age – a legacy they are now saddled with.
- While a transit trip may take twice as long as a car trip, need to look at any transit signal priority very carefully—the benefit for bus travel times may be outweighed by total additional congestion caused, and that may actually harm overall mobility. To really move transit fast, it should have its own right of way so the bus is not stuck in traffic.
- The convenience of the automobile for multiple stop trips should not be overlooked. Modeling should reflect the relative expense of auto versus transit trips.
- Consider at the capacity gained through the SCATS system, and try to quantify it—it's likely very cost effective. However it may be difficult to include in travel demand modeling – operationally it is easier to model. Need to look at the cost/benefit of all trips on all modes.
- Look at transit in the I-405 corridor. Vanpools also have lots of potential to move people in a very cost-effective manner.
- Incorporate demographics in the Downtown transportation analysis. Transit use, for example, is strongly influenced by demographics.

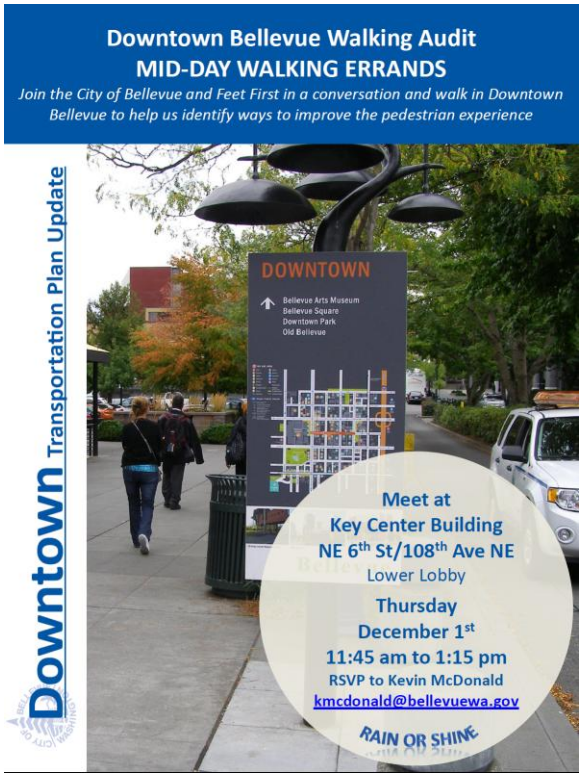
- Need to be innovative and think outside of the box in terms of potential solutions; look at opportunities for quicker transit loading, personal rapid transit (PRT), for example, and other new technologies.
- Often the idle time exceeds the moving time when driving through Downtown
- What is the overall transit mode share, and will there be a new target established? Need to get serious about advancing transit in the I-405 corridor, as outlined in the 405 master plan.

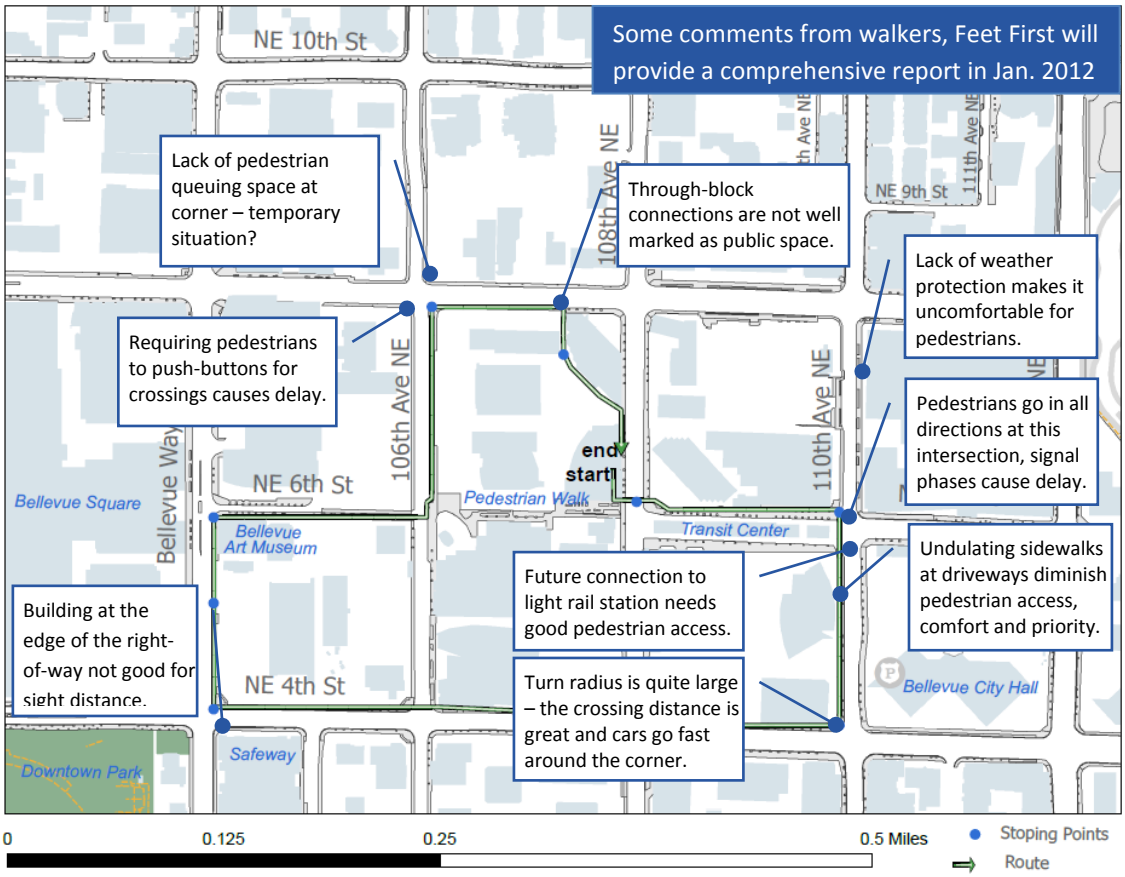
Questions

- What percentage of Downtown office space is occupied by Microsoft?
- What is the ultimate zoning capacity in Downtown (how many residents and jobs could be accommodated)?
- How do the revised forecasts compare to the 2030 forecasts that were used by the City and Sound Transit in the modeling work done for the Downtown East Link Concept Design Report?
- Will there also be a revised estimate of job or household growth for the Bel-Red area and what are the implications for Downtown growth?
- How do Class A office absorption rates for Downtown Bellevue compare to other office markets in the region?
- What is the boundary of the Downtown subarea? How does that compare with the way the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) considers the boundaries for Downtown?
- What is the vacancy rate for condominiums (as opposed to apartments)?
- Bellevue is revising its job forecasts for Downtown Bellevue—is the PSRC also adjusting the regional employment forecast?
- How many square feet of new office is expected in Downtown in the next 10 -20 years?
- How broad of an area outside of Downtown will we be analyzing for traffic counts and transportation impacts?
- The DIP assumed a 40% transit mode split for home-based work trips. How will transit mode split be determined for this project?
- How will parking price and supply be factored into the transportation analysis? Does Microsoft charge for parking in Downtown Bellevue?
- Does the BKR model separate parking price for office uses versus retail uses?
- Is there going to be a technical advisory committee to look at the model assumptions?
- Is there a “target”, or assumed, vacancy rate for commercial and residential buildings in Downtown?
- How is land use planning being coordinated with the transportation plan update?
- Will the technical assumptions used in travel demand modeling be available for public review? They should be.
- Does the travel model take into account the cost of operating a car, versus the cost of providing transit?
- How will the BKR model consider the Downtown SCATS system?

I. Walking Audit – December 1

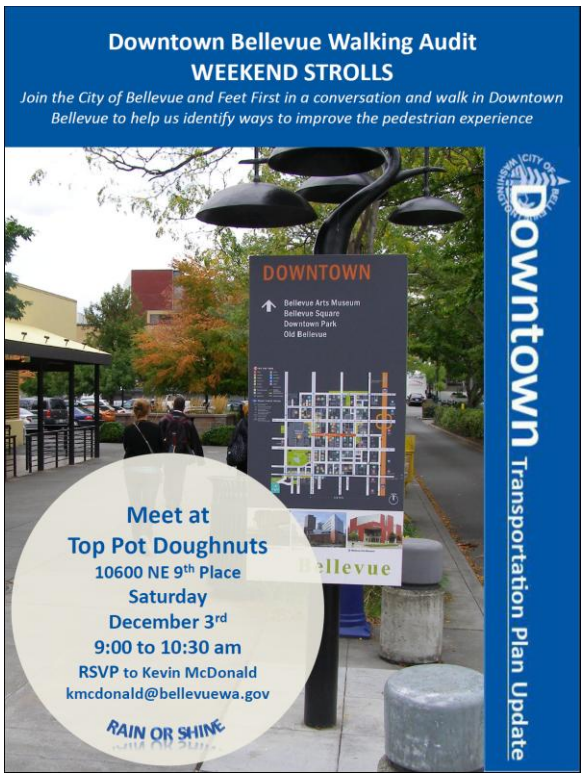
Select comments from walkers who participated. A full report will be available in January 2012.

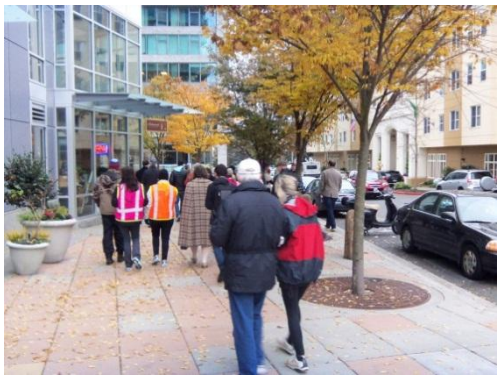


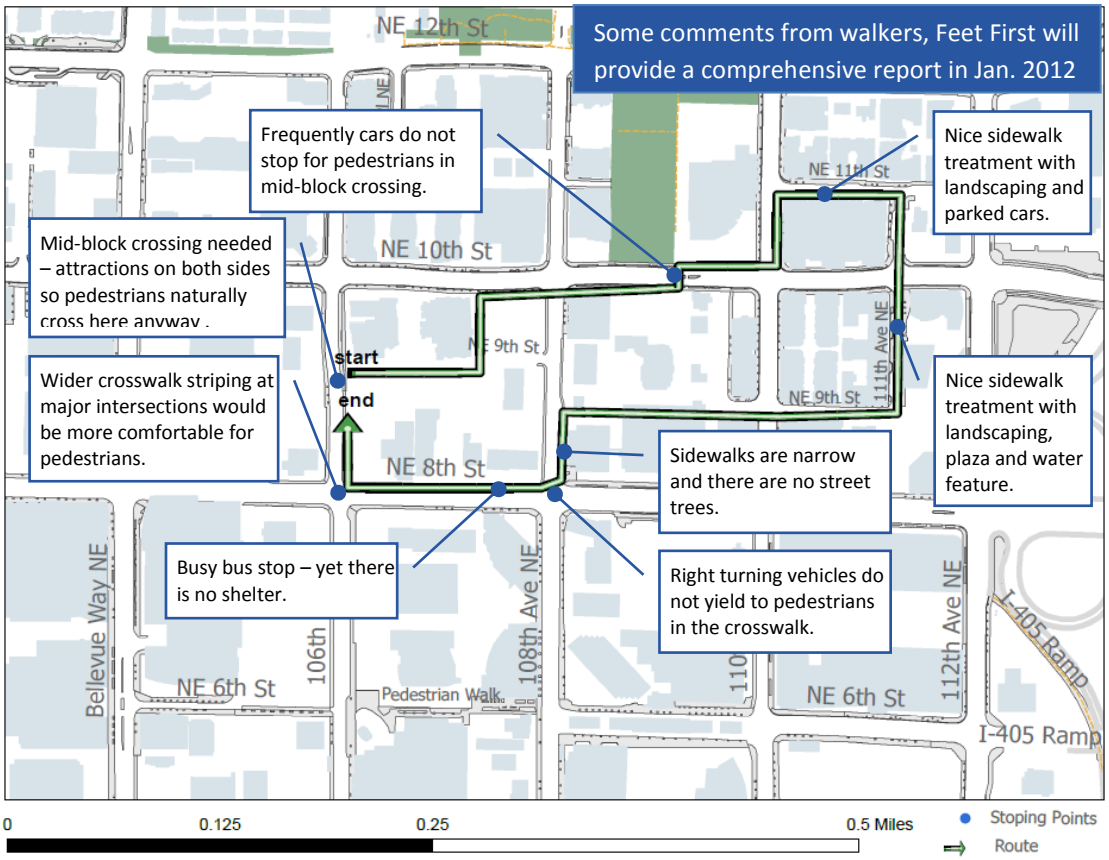


J. Walking Audit – December 3

Select comments from walkers who participated. A full report will be available in January 2012.







K. Building Owners and Managers Association

December 7, 2011
Comments and questions from BOMA members in attendance:

Comments:

- Measures of effectiveness should consider the anticipated effect of projects on mode split. Different land uses (e.g. office, retail, residential) and densities have demonstrable mode splits (SOV, HOV & transit). These actual mode splits (vs. theoretical or desired) should be used in the transportation model.
- To better serve the Downtown Bellevue population consider adjusting some of the existing transit routes so people do not have to walk so far to access transit service.
- Perhaps create an underground roadway beneath the Pedestrian Corridor to provide for vehicle mobility while maintaining grade separation from pedestrians.
- More mid-block crossings and connections would help pedestrian access within the "superblock" Downtown grid.
- Provide better weather protection for pedestrians along sidewalks.
- Regional connectivity is important to Downtown economic development.
- Mid-block pedestrian routes through superblocks may be considered pedestrian amenities by providing alternative routes for pedestrians away from traffic using indoor or outdoor mid-block connections.
- The Bellevue Downtown Association had a "walking committee" in the 1990s – demonstrating that the notion of improving the pedestrian experience Downtown is not a new idea.
- Consider grade-separation at certain intersections by slightly depressing the roadway and slightly elevating the pedestrian crossings (similar to a project in Phoenix).

Questions:

- What will be the impact on the Bellevue Transit Center of tolling on the SR 520 bridge – given the assumption that there will be a significant shift to transit when tolls commence. What, if any, changes to the transit center's operations are expected? While some additional transit service may be in place, the scale of the shift has yet to be measured.
- Has the City's SCATS system fully maximized its potential to improve traffic operations or can it be counted on to address emerging mobility issues going forward to 2030?
- Can incentives be used to encourage employers and employees to consider flexible work schedules to reduce travel demand?
- Could there be a transit free-ride zone in Downtown Bellevue?
- Considering the Pedestrian Corridor and how well it works, could there be other strategies employed to separate pedestrians from vehicles, such as providing connections between underground parking garages?

L. Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative

December 14, 2011
Comments and questions from members in attendance:

Comments:

- Connections to neighborhoods are important
- Crosswalk timing is too short at some intersections for older adults to comfortably cross – streets then become barriers.
- The "Seattle Road Safety Plan" includes recommendations for improving the pedestrian environment and includes "best practices" for everything from crosswalks to street grates to signage.
- The University of Washington has published a report called "Built Environment and Mobility Study".
- Refer to the "Area Plan of Aging" 2012-15 Draft Plan at AgingKingCounty.org
- Immigrant and refugee communities are particularly transit and walk/bike dependent.
- Access to the future light rail station is important – pedestrian access and wayfinding in particular and also bicycle access
- Benches installed at intersections and mid-block locations enable people of all abilities to enjoy a walk.
- Taxi stands to facilitate pick-up/drop off at key locations may be increasingly important to provide mobility.

Questions:

- What is the "best practice" from other cities for accommodating older adults or those with impaired mobility to access fixed route transit service or to businesses and neighborhood destinations? It was noted that Tempe, Arizona employs a circulator system known as Orbit to provide connections between adjacent neighborhoods and the Downtown Arizona State University campus.

M. On Line Questionnaire Comments

Comments received from the public via the on-line questionnaire

What are your main transportation concerns?	What specific improvements would you like to see in the future?	Do you have other comments?
Pedestrian safety	Focus more on walking safety in Bellevue downtown core.	I have lived in downtown Bellevue for 16 years and walk around everywhere, almost got hit by car many times.....
Safety, speed, noise, pollution, cost.	4 way red lights at busy pedestrian crossings - so a pedestrian can cross kitty-corner, waiting for only 1 light change, instead of 3.	Pedestrians should not have to wait for more light changes than drivers.
Downtown mobility for residents of downtown Bellevue.	More mid-block crossings funded as part of on-going safety improvements for downtown. Minimize any through streets within the super blocks to encourage pedestrians to use interior avenues to navigate downtown. Maintain the major streets for cars.	We should not need to wait for key safety mid-block crossings, such as at NE 9th Street and 106th Avenue NE, due to special funding. These pedestrian/vehicle safety improvements should be part of existing transportation funding.
Increasing local and regional traffic congestion consequent to tolling on the 520 Bridge and "adjustment" of traffic lanes to accommodate light rail on I-90. Pedestrian non-accommodation on many downtown Bellevue streets (traffic light synchronicity favors cars). Lack of traffic enforcement on downtown Bellevue streets.	Regular, visible traffic enforcement on downtown Bellevue streets. Bellevue should proactively advocate it's citizens' interests, concerns and offer alternative approaches to WA DOT planning. Traffic light sequencing on downtown Bellevue streets should accommodate different pedestrian traffic patterns during different times of the day and different days (for example, higher pedestrian traffic on streets from 11:30AM to 1:30PM on weekdays). More public parking areas should be planned and afforded. Most streets are not bicycle-friendly; signage and street-markings should be added to increase awareness of bicyclists and so also encourage bicycling throughout Bellevue. On longer city blocks, add mid-block pedestrian crossings	Regular, visible traffic enforcement on downtown Bellevue streets. Bellevue should proactively advocate it's citizens' interests, concerns and offer alternative approaches to WA DOT planning. Traffic light sequencing on downtown Bellevue streets should accommodate different pedestrian traffic patterns during different times of the day and different days (for example, higher pedestrian traffic on streets from 11:30AM to 1:30PM on weekdays). More public parking areas should be planned and afforded. Most streets are not bicycle-friendly; signage and street-markings should be added to increase awareness of bicyclists and so also encourage bicycling throughout Bellevue. On longer city blocks, add mid-block pedestrian crossings
Because of increasing traffic, it takes longer and longer to drive in Bellevue. Lack of sidewalks where I walk (Spring Hills No. 4). There are areas the cars cannot see you.	More sidewalks. Less development--development increases traffic. Sufficient spaces to park at all Eastside park and rides	I have not tried to use the bus recently, but in the past encountered the following problems: a) inability to find a space at park and rides b) Lack of ability to take a bus home from an evening Benaroya Concert from the tunnel c) Lack of ability to take a bus from downtown Seattle to south Kirkland park and ride in the middle of the day
Pedestrian safety	Focus more on walking safety in the Bellevue downtown core.	I live in downtown Bellevue for 16 years and walk around everywhere, almost got hit by car many times.....
Safety, speed, noise, pollution, and cost.	4 way red lights at busy pedestrian crossings - so a pedestrian can cross kitty-corner, waiting for only 1 light change, instead of 3.	Pedestrians should not have to wait for more light changes than drivers.